



ANCIENT GREECE



THE DARK AGES: C. 1100 - 800 B.C.

and

THE ARCHAIC PERIOD: C. 800 - 500 B.C.

The "*Dorians*" settled in Greece and they brought their dialect of Greek with them. There is very little known about this period of time thus it is called the Dark Ages. The art of writing was lost after the Mycenaean civilization had ended, and there were no written records. The population had decreased dramatically. The standard of pottery, jewellery and architecture suffered a general decline. Some skills such as fresco painting and cutting gems were forgotten.

During the Dark Ages, the buildings were made of mud bricks and wood. These materials do not last like stone and very few buildings survived. The homes looked like small huts.

The clothing worn during this period was simple, loose tunics, made from rectangular pieces of cloth that were fastened at the shoulders with dress pins. This style of dress is called the "*Doric chiton*".

A cemetery in Athens revealed that cremation was introduced in the Dark Ages. The Dorians burned the body of the deceased and stored their ashes in a clay jar. Then the jar was placed in a grave and buried.

The Archaic Period was a time of progress and expansion. The population increased and the standard of living improved. Greeks were beginning to have more contact with the outside world and the first Olympic games took place in this period.

Around 800 B.C. the Greeks began to use writing again. They had been trading with the Phoenicians who had used an alphabet with only consonants. The Greeks, added vowel sounds and this system of writing was much easier to use and it was the base of the alphabet that we use today.

During the Dark Ages written records were not kept but the people had a very strong oral tradition. Stories were passed on by professional poets called "*bards*". They travelled all over telling stories about the gods and the